

TAC NEWS

September-October 1995
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TAC NEWS GOES BI-MONTHLY

The 1995 Tac News series now puts into your hands three times the amount of information provided in past years. As a new feature, Tac News now includes historic unit organizations. Each organization is formatted to aid both the novice and expert in building a complete wargaming army or collection. Even with all this new stuff Tac News is still free. To get a copy simply place a mail order and the current Tac News will be included in the package. This is now the only way to get Tac News. To be sure of obtaining the latest issue, simply place a mail order at least every other month to GHQ.

HUS13 DDG Arleigh Burke



GWG13 TBD 67



1942 AMERICAN ARMORED ORGANIZATION

The 1942 American Armored Division consisted of two armored regiments. These armored regiments were designed as pursuit forces capable of exploiting, but not necessarily creating, breakthroughs. Because they were expected to outstrip divisional assets in battle, armored regiments had strong organic reconnaissance and service components. There was no regimental armored infantry and armored artillery elements. Infantry was considered to have no role in pursuit, and tank cannon alone was deemed sufficient to provide direct and indirect fire support.

All sixteen American armored divisions formed during the war initially had a two-regiment structure. By September 1943, at the behest of Gen. Leslie McNair, all armored divisions were reorganized into separate battalions. The exceptions being 1st, 2nd, and 3rd

Armored Divisions which were at the time already overseas. The 1st reorganized during July 1944, the 2nd and 3rd did not reorganize until after war's end.

Each 1942 armored regiment had one light and two medium tank battalions. Both battalion structures were virtually identical. The light battalion mustered fewer men only because the Stuart tank had a smaller crew than either the M3 Lee/Grant or M4 Sherman medium tanks.

Initially, American medium tank battalions were built around the M3 General Lee. The M3 was an interim tank design used to fill a production void until American industry became fully mobilized. By the time of the Tunisian campaign the M3 was already a desert veteran, having been sent to the British via lend-lease. At the time the M3 was the best tank in the British inventory, but

combat revealed some fatal shortcomings. The M3's riveted armor was easily burst by German anti tank guns and its high silhouette made it painfully obvious on flat desert battlefields. Furthermore, the M3 had a slow rate of fire due to difficulties inherent with its sponson-mounted 75mm gun. The Russians also thought little of their lend-lease M3s, calling them "seven graves for seven brothers." The M4 Sherman was to have completely replaced the M3 by 1943, but, with the fall of Tobruk, Roosevelt promised the first 200 Shermans to a disconsolate Churchill. This offer virtually assured victory at El Alamein, but it also meant that the Americans took the field in inferior M3s, while the British enjoyed the luxury of US-built Shermans. This fact was viewed by GI tankers with bitter acrimony.

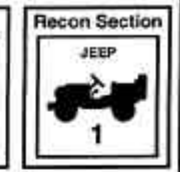
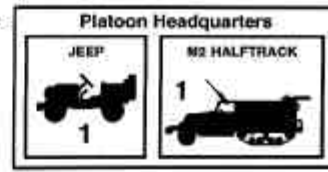
1942 United States Medium Tank Battalion

Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company

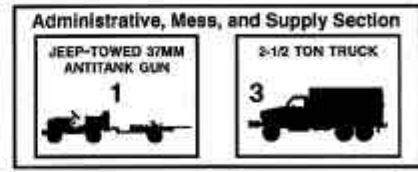
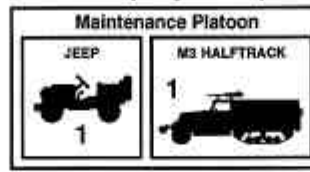
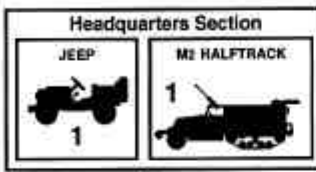
Battalion Headquarters



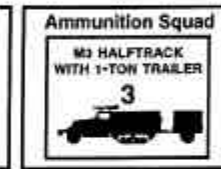
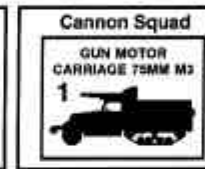
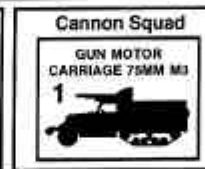
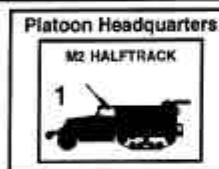
Reconnaissance Platoon
(directly controlled by Battalion Headquarters)



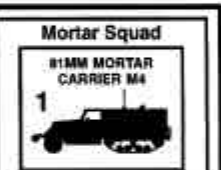
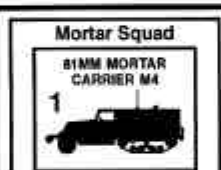
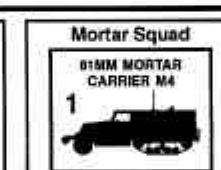
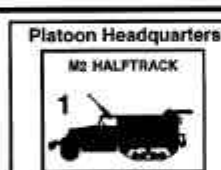
Company Headquarters



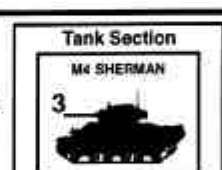
Cannon Platoon



Mortar Platoon

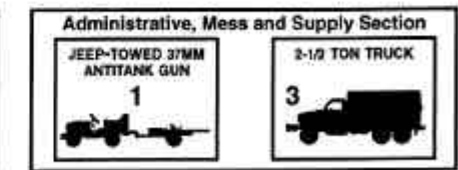
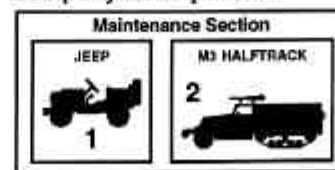
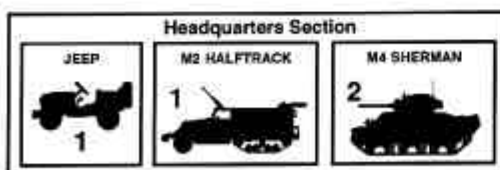


Battalion Tank Section
(directly controlled by Battalion Headquarters)

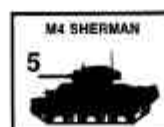


Three Medium Tank Companies; each

Company Headquarters




Three Medium Tank Platoons; each




Please note: To make a 1942 Light Tank Battalion simply substitute the Shermans with Stuarts. This is also the same organization used for the M3 Medium Tank Battalion. As a field expedient, the Americans substituted jeep-towed 37mms ATGs for the M6 37mm SPAT. This is so indicated in the schematic.

STATS, SPECS, AND FACTS

SPECIFICATIONS		<p>Combat experience on the Eastern Front found Wehrmacht panzers out-numbered and out-classed. With new tank designs years away and replacement production slow, the Germans resorted to a series of expedient measures utilizing redundant or captured material. The Marder III was built by converting obsolete Pz Kpfw 38(t) battle tanks into gun carriages. This was accomplished by removing the turret and rebuilding the superstructure into an open-topped fighting compartment. The vehicle's main gun was a captured Russian 7.62 "Crash-Boom".</p> <p>Sixty-six Marder IIIs served in North Africa. The first six units, arriving in May 1942, were directly attached to Army Headquarters. The remainder, arriving during the period of July to November 1942, served in the 33rd and 39th Panzerjäger Abteilungen.</p>
	WEIGHT: 10.67 tons	
	HULL LENGTH: 5.85 meters	
	WIDTH: 2.16 meters	
	SPEED: 42 km/hr (road speed)	
	RANGE: 185 kilometers	
	MAIN GUN: one 7.62cm PaK36 (r)	
G112 Marder III 7.62(r)	MACHINE GUN(S): one 7.92mm MG37(l)	

SPECIFICATIONS		<p>In the early years of World War Two the Mark III was the principal battle tank of the Panzertruppen. Initially armed with a 37mm main gun, the Mark III was subsequently rearmed with a "short" 5cm KwK L42, and then a "long" 5cm KwK L/60. Because the turret ring was too small to accommodate a larger caliber gun, Mark III production was converted to assault guns early in 1943. Even so, Mark III battle tanks continued providing yeoman service with over 430 participating in the great Kursk offensive.</p> <p>In Africa, the Mark III came to symbolized the Afrika Korps. It was the scourge of the desert, proving superior to every Allied tank save the Matilda. By the time of Kasserine, however, the Mark III was out-classed by the Sherman. Nonetheless, the Mark III continued to serve playing a vital role in the defense of Tunisia and Sicily.</p>
	WEIGHT: 22.7 tons	
	HULL LENGTH: 6.41 meters	
	WIDTH: 2.95 meters	
	SPEED: 40 km/hr (road speed)	
	RANGE: 155 kilometers	
	MAIN GUN: one 5cm KwK39 L/60	
G27 Pz Kpfw III M	MACHINE GUN(S): two 7.92mm MG34	

SPECIFICATIONS		<p>By November of 1941, the Germans decided to up-gun the Mark IV with the high velocity KwK40 L/43 7.5cm anti tank gun. This modification was to have taken place with the "G" series, but conditions at the front deemed the change be made immediately. Mark IV production was thus suspended for one month as factories retooled. In the interim, existing MK IV Fs were refitted on the assembly lines with high-velocity 7.5cm guns. Fully half of the "F" series was so converted and designated Mk IV F2. The British called them "Mark IV Specials".</p> <p>In its day, before the advent of the T-34/85 and Sherman, the Mark IV Special out-classed every tank in the Allied inventory. At the time of Kasserine, the Germans considered the mechanically reliable Mk IV Special just as valuable as the more powerful Tiger.</p>
	WEIGHT: 23 tons	
	HULL LENGTH: 5.62 meters	
	WIDTH: 2.84 meters	
	SPEED: 40 km/hr (road speed)	
	RANGE: 200 kilometers	
	MAIN GUN: one 7.5cm KwK40 L/43	
G22 Pz Kpfw IV F2	MACHINE GUN(S): two 7.92mm MG34	

SPECIFICATIONS		<p>The Sd 222 was a improved version of the Sd 221, featuring a larger turret with a 2cm cannon and co-axial machine gun. The 2cm was a dual-purpose gun with a mounting that allowed a near-vertical elevation for engaging enemy aircraft. During its production run the Sd 222 was further improved by adding a larger engine and hydraulic brakes. It carried only a short-range radio, because its intended role was that of escort for cars mounting long-range sets (the Sd 223).</p> <p>By mid-1943, German armored cars were expected to hold their own as armored fighting vehicles. For this reason production on the Sd 222 ceased. It was never fully phased-out, however, because the heavier cars intended to replace it were never available in sufficient numbers. The Sd 222 thus served until war's end.</p>
	WEIGHT: 4.8 tons	
	HULL LENGTH: 4.8 meters	
	WIDTH: 1.95 meters	
	SPEED: 85 km/hr (road speed)	
	RANGE: 300 kilometers	
	MAIN GUN: one 2cm KwK30	
G15 Sd. 222 Armored Car & Sd. 223 Radio Car	MACHINE GUN(S): one 7.92mm MG34	

SPECIFICATIONS		<p>In 1933 the firm of Hansa-Lloyd-Goliath Werke of Bremen was contracted by the German government to develop a tractor capable of towing a three-ton load. After a series of trials, the Hanomag company of Hanover was charged to further develop this design utilizing an armored superstructure designed by Büssing-NAG. By the end of 1938 a final trial series was completed and the first models were issued to the troops that following spring. By 1940, the Wehrmacht had three basic versions of the SdKfz 251, the <i>Ausführung</i> A, B, and C.</p> <p>Afrika Korps panzerergrenadiers were motorized and therefore did not ride in halftracks. However, various marks of the 251 did see desert service as support vehicles in battalion and army-level headquarter companies.</p>
	WEIGHT: 7.4 tons	
	HULL LENGTH: 19 feet	
	WIDTH: six feet, eleven inches	
	SPEED: 33 mph (road speed)	
	FUEL CONSUMPTION: 3.5 miles per gallon	
	MAIN GUN: varied between models	
G103 (a) SdKfz 251/C 3	MACHINE GUN(S): two 7.92mm MG34s	



Kasserine Mini-Campaign Part 3: Counterattack!

With the destruction of 1st Armored Division's CCA, Task Force Waters was completely surrounded on the high ground north of Sidi Bou Zid. Now was the time for an American counterattack, but Gen. Sir Kenneth Anderson, the overall Allied commander, was unsure of his enemy's disposition. Rommel's strike at the Faid Pass came as a complete surprise. Sir Kenneth's staff hoped this attack was no more than a battalion-strength diversion masking an offensive the Allies expected farther to the north. Still, some effort had to be made to rescue Lt. Col. "Bill" Waters, the son-in-law of Gen George Patton. Sir Kenneth played his cards close to the vest, dispatching just Combat Command B of the 1st Armored Division to rescue Waters. To cover his bet he retained Combat Command C and a full British tank battalion in reserve.

The result was a catastrophe. The 2nd Battalion of the First Armored regiment, supported by the 3rd Battalion of the Sixth Armored Infantry ran into the combined strength of two panzer divisions. Kampfgruppen Reimann and Gerhardt were at the moment mopping-up Waters, hoping to bait the Americans into a counterattack. CCB was allowed some initial gains toward Djebel Lessouda before it was viciously attacked by the 1st Company of the 501st Independent Heavy Tank Battalion. The Tigers rolled up the American Grants as they vainly tried to cover the retreat of their armored infantry. By day's end, forty-six of the 2nd Battalion's fifty tanks were lost. The Germans had eradicated their second enemy armored battalion in as many days.

LEGEND

The map's top half is north. The town of Faid lies just off the east edge of the map by the highway. The Faid Pass itself lies some six hexes beyond that.

The hill is a level three elevation. It was a gentle rise, covered with stone outcroppings and scrub vegetation. Wadi El Fekka, which bisects the northwest corner of the board, is a minus one depression.

AMERICAN

CCB moves first, entering the west edge of the board south of the highway. The remnants of Task Force Waters are confined to any second or third level elevation hex.

GERMAN

Kampfgruppe Reimann and Gerhardt set-up anywhere north of the highway excluding enemy occupied hexes. The Tigers set-up hidden.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game consists of twelve one-hour turns. To win, the American must occupy Djebel Lessouda for one turn and then exit the west edge of the board with at least one stand from Task Force Waters. Good luck. Had the Allies acted more decisively, the battle could have easily turned in their favor. Try a plausible historic variation. Add an American Sherman tank battalion and another armored infantry battalion to the Allied order of battle.

